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Team Leader Resource Guide





Acknowledgements

This “*Team Leader Resource Guide*” is a product of EPA’s Workforce Development Strategy. The Strategy is an initiative of the Office of Administration and Resources Management, working in partnership with EPA’s Human Resources Council. One of OARM’s key priorities is “preparing EPA for future challenges by building the skills of its people while fostering diversity.” During the last several years, EPA has emphasized working in teams as a primary way to accomplish its work. This information is important to successfully lead teams to higher levels of performance.

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Introduction

This “*Team Leader Resource Guide*” was created for you by the EPA’s Institute for Individual and Organizational Excellence (The Institute). The work you do as a Team Leader is vital to getting the Agency’s work accomplished through its teams. This Guide is offered to support you in your development as a high performing team leader.

The “*Team Leader Resource Guide*” was developed in response to the Agency’s recent Workforce Assessment Project findings (May ‘99). Those findings:

- Identified the competencies needed by various categories of our workforce today and in the future, and
- Revealed significant competency gaps.

The Institute’s Management Development Project has produced several resources to ensure that our supervisors, managers, and executives possess the necessary competencies to lead the Agency in achieving its mission - now and in the future. We also recognize that team leaders play important roles within our organization.

This guide:

- Shares the Agency’s leadership philosophy;
- Articulates the expectations for EPA’s team leaders;
- Explains the need for team leader development;
- Describes team leader roles and responsibilities and the competencies necessary for success;
- Answers frequently asked questions and provides tips for team leaders; and
- Provides support resources and suggested readings.



EPA's Leadership Philosophy

All EPA employees are expected to demonstrate effective leadership—and our executives, managers, and supervisors play a unique role in leading the way. EPA's leaders must examine their personal assumptions, beliefs, and organizational behavior concerning the nature of people and work; the motivation of individuals and groups; the role bosses are expected to play; and how leadership is going to be exercised.

With this personal introspection and a fundamental redefinition of leadership, we can create the mind sets and conditions that nurture and empower employees. Creating and nurturing a climate of commitment, competence, and confidence helps employees apply their unique strengths and take responsibility for organizational success. Employees want to be a part of something important. Most want and can be trusted to do an effective job and are capable, creative, and innovative individuals.

We must focus on the work of leadership: people at every level of the organization more fully understand EPA's goals and how their work (and others) fits into achieving those goals.

The work of leadership is about: *understanding* the needs of the customers and *serving* them, *supporting* and *enabling* employees, *educating* and *coaching*, and *working collaboratively (teaming)* with others to achieve a win/win outcome.

In summary, leadership is a team responsibility rather than a solo activity—it's sharing power and responsibility with other leaders at all levels of the organization to more effectively achieve EPA's mission. Effective leadership will make a difference for EPA and for your development.*

EPA's leadership philosophy is clear:

*All employees are expected to be leaders, and
team leaders play a vital leadership role.*

* EPA's Management Development Resource Guide, pages 5 & 6, July 2000, (EPA 210-B-00-001),



Team Leader Expectations

All EPA team leaders are expected to demonstrate competency in areas of leadership, management, technical expertise, and team work. As an EPA team leader, you have unique responsibilities in each of these areas. Specifically, you are expected to:

- Be an effective role model who demonstrates effective workplace communication and collaboration;
- Complement the qualities of EPA's executives, managers, and supervisors;
- Be a catalyst for positive change leading to higher organizational performance;
- Create and nurture a team work environment that fosters customer service, diversity, empowerment, creativity, and innovation;
- Be an effective project coordinator;
- Routinely seek and give feedback;
- Contribute to the organization by mentoring and coaching others;
- Be a continuous learner;
- Ensure the development of your team members; and
- Take personal responsibility – and hold yourself accountable for your own development.



Here's a creative way to remember the opportunities and challenges you have as a team leader:

**T
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A
M**

Trust yourself and your team.

Encourage and inspire others.

A Catalyst for change—You can do it!

Mentor and coach at every opportunity—give back to your organization.

**L
E
A
D
E
R**

Learn continuously—from your team, management and yourself!

Empower and nurture others—create a positive environment.

Actively listen to and engage others in team discussions.

Deliver and your team will too!

Elicit feedback as well as give feedback.

Role model leadership—your team is watching you!

Each EPA office is expected to develop its team leaders, providing them with the information, tools and skills necessary to be successful in their unique leadership role.

Team Leader Development is Essential



“You can’t motivate people—the door is locked from inside. You can create a climate in which most of your team members will motivate themselves to help the organization reach its goals.”


Robert Townsend

Here at EPA we are offering more and more opportunities for employees to assume leadership roles and develop effective leadership skills and competencies.

One of EPA’s strategic goals is *effective management*:

“EPA will establish a management infrastructure that will set and implement the highest quality standards for effective internal management and fiscal responsibility.”

Another EPA goal is *effective team leadership and stewardship*. In the Agency’s September 2000 Strategic Plan (pages 61 - 62) teamwork and collaboration are mentioned as being essential to EPA’s efforts to achieve our goals. Teamwork and collaboration are to be routinely practiced with internal and external partners. The Agency is committed to support teamwork within organizations and across organizational boundaries.



In light of EPA's strategic goals, the Agency needs team leaders to better prepare themselves so they can support our executives, managers, supervisors, and staff to:

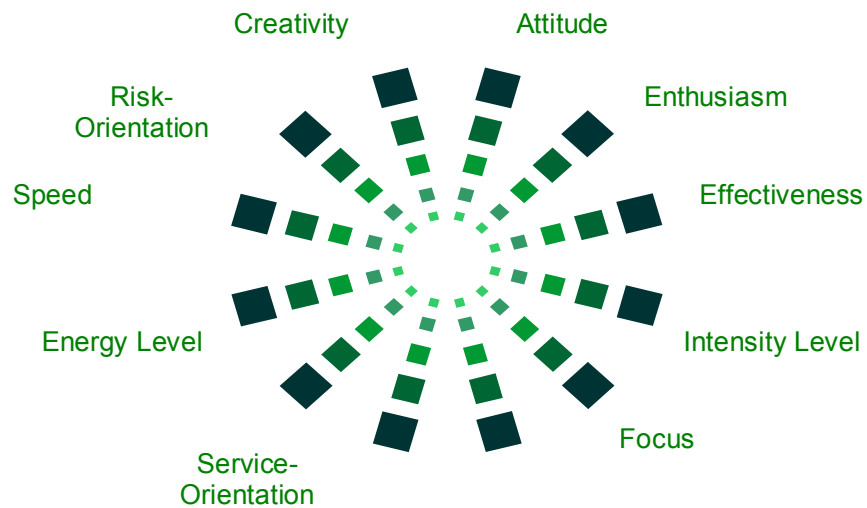
- Help achieve the Agency's mission of protecting human health and the environment;
- Provide more effective and efficient service to the public;
- Provide the leadership necessary to create and sustain a high performance organization; and
- Facilitate positive change and meet future challenges.



The Influence of Team Leaders on Team Performance

Team Leaders have a tremendous impact on how teams perform and accomplish their work. To illustrate this, take the following sentence and select any word to fill in both the blanks...

The _____ of the team leader is the _____ of the team.



**Rarely will team members rise higher than the standard set by the team leader.
Team members tend to pay more attention to what the leader does than what the leader says.**

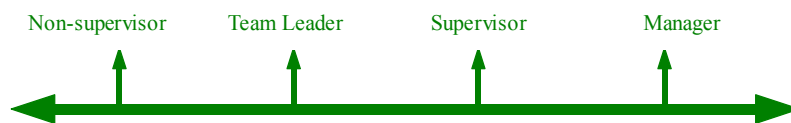


Team Leader Roles and Responsibilities

As a Team Leader, you serve a unique role in the organization and perform a variety of responsibilities. Team leaders work with team members to complete specific tasks, provide work products and services, and meet program and production needs. Typically, a team leader assists the team with leadership and team building skills. In addition to serving as liaison between the supervisor and the team, the team leader models skills which include group facilitation, coaching, problem solving, interpersonal communication, and resource gathering. Team leaders, along with team members, are accountable for outcomes and results and rely upon each other to achieve team goals.

Distinctions between team leader and supervisory roles and responsibilities may not always be clear. To successfully perform your team leader role you must understand where your duties and the duties of your supervisor differ. Recognize how you can best complement each other while moving the work of the team forward.

There are several key differences between team leaders and supervisors.




Leadership and supervision duties, tasks or assignments may be thought of as points along a continuum from non-supervisory to managerial work. The range of duties a team leader may be assigned is flexible within limits.



For a quick reference, the chart below lists examples of some of the more significant differences between team leaders and supervisors. These examples are not intended to be all inclusive.*

Team Leaders	Supervisors
Explain team goals and objectives to assigned team members and assist teams in organizing to accomplish work.	Set team goals, select team leaders, assign team members and administratively and technically direct the work of subordinates.
Coach, facilitate, solve work problems and participate in the work of the team.	Plan, assign, review and accept, and amend or reject work done by teams and subordinates.
Provide information to the supervisor on performance of the team and individuals.	Assign performance ratings, approve awards and take performance-based corrective actions.
Communicate assignments, milestones and deadlines to the team and individuals based on supervisor's instructions.	Make work assignments, set or negotiate deadlines and completion dates.
Observe training needs and relay training needs and requests to supervisor.	Schedule and approve funding for team and individual training.
Inform supervisor of attendance and behavioral problems.	Counsel employees on behavior and initiate disciplinary actions if required.
Relay requests for resources and supplies.	Allocate resources to teams.

**For additional information see OPM's General Schedule Leader Grade Evaluation Guide, June 1998, HRCD - 5 – available at OPM's website – www.opm.gov or consult with your Personnel Specialist or Human Resources Officer.*



Team Leaders perform a range of duties to ensure that the team completes the work expected. Supervisors and managers count on the team leader to deliver! As a leader, your knowledge, skills, abilities, competencies, and expert work methods supplement traditional supervisory approaches. Effective team leaders empower all members of the team to deliver quality and timely products and services to their customers.



As a team leader, you have **NO official authority to :*

- *Conduct Performance Appraisals*
- *Approve leave*
- *Sign time cards*
- *Recommend disciplinary action*
- *Initiate Performance Improvement Plans*
- *Recommend promotions*
- *Assign work that requires overtime*

**See footnote reference on page 10.*



Competencies Needed for Effective Team Leadership

“I can measure my life by the teams I have fielded...Patiently, I have waited each year for that moment when I had merged all the skills and weaknesses of those in my care. I have watched that miraculous synthesis. When it comes, I look around my field...and in a rush of omnipotence I want to shout to the sun... I have created a team.”

Pat Conroy

The following competencies are essential for team leaders:

LEADERSHIP

Demonstrate and encourage high standards of behavior; adapt leadership style to situations and people; and **empower, motivate, and guide** others.

Promote teamwork and cooperation within the team and with other teams; and **demonstrate clear ability to lead others and inspire others to follow**.

Understand the elements which contribute to the success of team meetings; **design and lead meetings** to foster participation and achieve clear outcomes; and ensure that team meetings are run effectively and efficiently.

Direct and influence others, guide your team to achieve the mission, and help team members reach their individual and team goals.

Demonstrate effective human resources management, team member recruitment, training, and recognition; help and encourage others to improve their skills and competencies; and support affirmative employment and employee well being.



DECISION MAKING

Take action and appropriate risks when needed; and make difficult decisions when needed.

COMMUNICATION & INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Provide coaching and constructive feedback; encourage others to develop their competencies; listen without giving unwanted advice or rescuing; and provide regular feedback to your supervisor. Feedback may be about team activities, obstacles and accomplishments.

Communicate and listen to individuals directly to encourage superior performance, partnership, and trust. Provide clear and effective oral presentations to individuals and teams; ask questions for clarification and understanding; communicate effectively in writing; re-view/edit others' writing; create opportunities for dialogue and active listening; and listen for key team issues and concerns.

Anticipate and seek to **resolve disagreements and complaints** in a constructive manner; and play an instrumental role in resolving interpersonal or procedural conflicts which are inevitable whenever people work together.

Network with and provide information to key groups and individuals; appropriately **use negotiation, persuasion, and influencing skills** to achieve goals; and consult with organizational development specialists, employee organizations, and other performance experts.

Recognize the value of cultural, ethnic, gender, and other individual differences (e.g., strengths, experiences, view points); demonstrate an ability to understand and work with all types of people; **promote a work environment that supports and values diversity**; serve as an example to your team by being someone who respects and works well with others.



Understand the principles of teaming and the importance of team development; clarify your team's purpose, roles & responsibilities, and expected outcomes & deadlines; ***influence others to work together and to establish positive group dynamics***; recognize the contributions and perspectives people bring to the team; match task assignments with competencies and preferences.

Meet with individuals on a regular basis to ***ensure that performance is successfully being monitored and measured***, primarily to suggest further performance improvement.

Actively ***promote the activities and accomplishments of the team*** with other parts of the organization.

Team leaders advocate team work and represent the team to others in the organization; ***establish effective partnerships and collaboration with others***; and inspire people/groups/organizations to work together for the common good.





CUSTOMER FOCUS

Actively seek customer input; **ensure customer needs are met**; and work to continuously improve the quality of services and products.



PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Set realistic project deadlines and help team members meet their individual and group deadlines.

Assist and guide your team to **clearly define the expectations for specific work assignments or tasks**.

Assign detailed work activity to team members while the supervisor assigns major areas of work.

Understand and apply the fundamentals of project management; guide others to work more effectively; **facilitate the phases of project planning**, including the development of team charters and work plans; and ensure that these documents have well-defined vision and mission statements, specific goals, objectives, and attainable schedules.

Review work and give substantive, technical, tactical, and strategic recommendations for improvement to team members.

Identify, solicit, and obtain team resources that your team needs to achieve its goals and that your team members need to complete their tasks.

Once the supervisor has ensured that all work assignments are commensurate with the grades of team members, follow-up and provide support to **ensure that all team assignments are carried out effectively and completely**.



CREATIVE THINKING/PROBLEM SOLVING

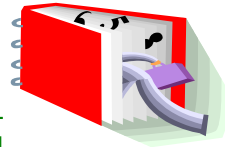
Develop insights and solutions; **encourage innovation** among others; recognize and define problems; analyze relevant information; and encourage alternative solutions and plans to solve problems.

Create a shared vision of the organization and the team; promote wide ownership; champion organizational development and positive change.

CONTINUOUS LEARNING

Take initiative to keep competencies current; stay informed of organizational and business trends; be receptive to learning new ways of doing business; and **be ready and flexible to change with the times**.

Stay informed on laws, policies, politics, administration priorities, trends, special interests, and other issues; **consider external impact** of statements or actions; and use information in decision-making.



TECHNICAL SAVVY

Demonstrate technical proficiency and expertise in current profession and understand its impact in areas of responsibility.

Understand scientific concepts related to the environment and the Agency; stay informed of current and future environmental developments; and **maintain a broad perspective and understanding** of the Agency and its mission.

FLEXIBILITY

Adapt to change in the work environment; and take personal responsibility for stress reduction.

Tips For Team Leaders

Keep these tips in mind when setting up your team:

- Make expectations and priorities clear;
- Recognize employees who perform well and immediately coach those who do not meet agreed upon expectations;
- Keep employees informed about all aspects of the project;
- Give employees a sense of ownership by having them track progress;
- Encourage employees to share leadership of the group by helping to lead regular team meetings and coordinate work tasks and projects; and
- Build trust among team members by creating opportunities for them to get to know each other better.





Frequently Asked Questions

Here are some frequently asked questions with suggested answers which may be of help to you and members of your team.

How can I get my team members to work better together and to share more accountability with one another and with me as team leader?

As your team forms, it is useful to make sure everyone understands the vision, mission, expectations, and intended outcomes of the team's work. When everyone understands and can picture what these elements are, they are more able to come together and share accountability for the milestones and successful accomplishments of the team. It is possible that you may need to spend extra time with some members of the team to make sure they understand their role and how they can best contribute their skills and talents to the team.

In addition to understanding the team's mission and vision, team members need to know how to work with each other. Allowing time for team members to get to know each other helps to build trust, establish rapport, and create more effective working relationships. Building supportive relationships could include ice breakers, team profiles, social time, and/or personal stories that are relevant to the team's work.

What can I do as a team leader to create and maintain an effective supervisor partnership?

Fully understand the role you play and the role your supervisor plays and seek clarity of each of your responsibilities. Keep the lines of communication open. Keep your supervisor informed. When conflicts or misunderstandings arise, address them promptly. Scheduling regular briefing appointments with your supervisor will help both of you to keep track of your team's progress and provide specific opportunities to discuss hot issues, day-to-day work, and the concerns that sometime require special attention.



What are some creative ways for acknowledging and recognizing effective team performance?

Rewarding teams effectively and creatively requires that you really know, understand, and appreciate your team. How we respond to recognition varies depending upon what motivates us to perform well. When you know what motivates your team, matching the recognition should come easily. Here are some guidelines to keep in mind:

- It is important that the recognition reflect the team's preferences or interests and the level of effort involved;
- Make sure your acknowledgment is specific and timely – give it as soon as possible after the achievement; and
- Remember to acknowledge everyone on the team.

What are some ways I can ensure that my team members are receiving the support they need to be effective team members?

Team members may have different needs in order to be effective. It may be that some team members have achieved a certain level of success and status within the organization and are on the team to make contributions and share their useful experiences. For others, working on a team is an opportunity for them to demonstrate their ability to make unique contributions. Furthermore, taking into account the personality preferences, skill levels, and previous team experience your team members have had will help to ensure that team members are getting what they need for both success and satisfaction.

What are some suggested ways I can help my team develop into a high-performing team?

All teams go through predictable stages of development. These stages are: *Forming—Storming—Norming—Performing*. It is important to be aware of these stages and understand the importance of leading others through these stages so the team can achieve high performance. You might consider having a facilitator or outside specialist assist you/your team through each of these stages of development. Retreats, training, special meetings, and on-going attention to these issues can truly make a difference. You might also access additional information regarding stages of team development and read more about teams/teaming (see Appendices A, B, and C).

Appendix A — Supporting Resources



- “Work Teams,” EPA Institute, Revised August 1994
- “Are You Ready for Work Teams?,” EPA Institute, August 1994
- “Implementing Work Teams,” EPA Institute, August 1994
- “*Draft Team EPA Implementation Guide*,” EPA Institute, June 1997
- “*Hitchhikers Guide to Teams*,” EPA’s Office of Water/Office of Wastewater Management/HQ, 1998 - Contact Brian Twillman
- “General Schedule Leader Grade Evaluation Guide,” Office of Personnel Management, June 1998
- EPA’s “Management Development Resource Guide,” July 2000 - available in hard copy and on the EPA’s website at www.intranet.epa.gov/institute
- EPA’s “A Human Resources Guide for Supervisors”, May 1999 - available in hard copy and on the EPA’s website at www.intranet.epa.gov/institute
- EPA’s “Workforce Assessment Project Report,” May 1999 - available in hard copy and on the EPA’s website at www.intranet.epa.gov/institute
- EPA’s Mid-Level Development Training Workshops -*Getting Work Done Through People, Getting Work Done Through Change, Getting Work Done Through Projects, Getting Work Done Through Processes, and Getting Work Done and Achieving Professional Results* – Contact the EPA Institute or your local Training Officer
- Teaming Resources – Contact your local Training Officer or Organization Development Specialist
- Assessment Tools, e.g., Keys, Benchmarks, Myers-Briggs, Birkman Instrument, Leadership Effectiveness Skills Inventory, 20/20 Insight. Contact Eduardo Rodela at the EPA Institute or your local Training Officer or Organization Development Specialist

Appendix B — Colleagues to Consult



Although there are many people within EPA who may provide guidance on teaming/team leader effectiveness, the following people may be available to offer consulting:

- **Brian Twillman**, Organization and Team Development Specialist, Office of Water, EPA /HQ
- **Diane Nelson**, High Performance Organization Initiative -EPA/Region 5
- **Jan Tarpey**, Training Officer - EPA/Region 7
- **Jane Chadbourne**, Organizational Consultant - EPA/Region 8

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202-564-7584 Project Training
- **Ken Wright** Lead, Organizational Leadership
202-564-7769 Enterprise
- **Eduardo Rodela** Lead, Mid-Level Development Project -
202-564-7586 Phase I

Appendix C — Suggested Reading List



Change & Change Management

- Beyond the Wall of Resistance: Unconventional Strategies that Build Support for Change by Rick Maurer, 1996
- “Building the People’s Capacity for Change” by Kenneth L. Wright and Joyce A. Thompson, *the TQM Magazine*, Vol. 9, 1997
- Dealing with Organizational Change: A Guide for Federal Employees and Managers by Kathryn Church, 1998
- Deep Change: Discovering the Leader Within by Robert E. Quinn, 1996
- Leading Change by John P. Kotter, 1996
- The Dance of Change: The Challenges to Sustaining Momentum in Learning Organizations by Peter Senge, 1999
- Turbulence! Challenges and Opportunities in the World of Work by Roger E. Herman, 1995
- Who Moved My Cheese? by Spencer Johnson, 2000

Empowerment

- Implementing Self-Directed Work Teams, Career Track Inc., 1992
- Self-Directed Work Teams: The New American Challenge by Jack Orsborn and Associates, 1990
- Teaming Up: Making the Transition to a Self-Directed Team-Based Organization by Darrel Ray and Howard Bronstein, 1994



- The New Self-Directed Work Teams: Mastering the Challenge by Jack D. Orsburn and Linda Moran, 1999

High Performance

- Designing Organizations for High Performance by David P. Hanna, 1988
- The Process of Excelling by Roger E. Herman, 1988
- The Wisdom of Teams: Creating the High Performance Organization by Jon R. Katzenbach and Douglas K. Smith, 1993

Innovation

- Flash of Brilliance: Inspiring Creativity Where You Work by William C. Miller, 1999
- Innovate or Evaporate - Test & Improve Your Organization's Innovation Quotient by James M. Higgins, 1994
- Orbiting the Giant Hairball by Gordon MacKenzie, 1998

Interpersonal Relations

- Human Dynamics by Sandra Seagul and David Horner, 1996
- Points of Influence - A Guide to Using Personality Theory at Work by Morley Segal, 1997
- Type Talk at Work - How the 16 Personality Types Determine Your Success on the Job by Otto Kroeger and Janet M. Thuesen, 1992

- Working Together - A Personality-Centered Approach to Management by Olaf Isachsen and Linda V. Berens, 1988
- Work it Out - Clues for Solving People Problems at Work by Sandra Krebs Hirsch, 1996

Leadership

- Enlightened Leadership - Getting to the Heart of Change by Ed Oakley and Doug Krug, 1991
- Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge by Warren Bennis and Bert Nanus, 1997
- Leadership from the Inside Out by Kevin Cashman, 1998
- Leadership Without Any Easy Answers by Ronald Heifetz, 1994
- Results-Based Leadership by David Ulrich, Jack Zenger, and Norm Smallwood, 1999
- The Center for Creative Leadership Handbook of Leadership Development by Cynthia D. McCauley, Russ S. Moxley, and Ellen Van Velsor, editors, 1998
- The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization by Peter Senge, 1994
- The Fifth Discipline Field Book by Peter Senge, 1994
- The Heart of a Leader by Kenneth Blanchard, 1999
- The Leadership Equation - Leadership, Management, and the Myers-Briggs by Lee and Norma Barr, 1989
- The Nine Natural Laws of Leadership by Warren Blank, 1995

- The Stuff of Heroes: The Eight Universal Laws of Leadership by William A. Cohen, 1998
- The Transformational Leader by Noel M. Tichy and M. A. De Vanna, 1997

Meeting Management

- How to Make Meetings Work - The New Interaction Method by Michael Doyle and David Straus, 1976

Recognition and Appreciation

- 1001 Ways to Reward Employees by Bob Nelson, 1994

Teaming

- 50 Powerful Teamwork Tips for Employees, 1993, Communications Briefings
- The Team Handbook by R. Sholtes and Associates, 1988

Team Dynamics

- Building Productive Teams by Glen Varney, 1989
- Stages of Development by B.W. Tuckman, 1994
- Team Reconstruction: Building a High Performance Work Group During Change, 1992, a Price Pritchett Publication

Team Facilitation

- Facilitation Skills for Team Leaders by Donald Hackett and Charles L. Martin, 1993
- How to LEAD Work Teams by Fran Rees, 1991



Notes



Notes



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OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND ORGANIZATIONAL SERVICES

***Management Development Project
Workforce Development Strategy***

EPA Institute for Individual and Organizational Excellence
<http://intranet.epa.gov/institute>